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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

NIC 02479-85
14 May 1985

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Graham E. Fuller
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SUBJECT: Implications of Recent Developments in Lebanon

1. Lebanon continues its bloody civil war with all factions trying to strengthen their respective areas of control. De facto cantonization continues. For the outside world there are two major aspects of developments which can affect US interests: a new move toward "secular terrorism", and the diminishing power of the Christians.

2. The New "Secular Terrorism". Amal and the Hizballah continue competition for guerrilla/terrorist attacks against the Israeli presence. Each is engaged in a struggle for the domination of south Lebanon. So far Amal appears to be by far the strongest force in the south, but it has not given up its guerrilla/suicide tactics against the Israelis. A new development in the past few weeks is the emergence of "secular terrorism", or guerrilla fighters who will act on a basis of secular Lebanese patriotism and allegiance to a secular party rather than on commitment to Islam. Several of these terrorists have been publicly identified with political parties--particularly the Syrian National Party and the Communist Party.

- The disturbing implication behind these recent "secular activists" is that the "Shia method" of dealing with the Israelis, i.e. suicide missions, is gaining some acceptability. Not all the attackers are Shia. The major threat is that suicide attacks as a form of guerrilla warfare may gain wider acceptability in the Middle East among non-Shia. The lesson is particularly important for the Palestinians.
- The only relatively good news is that Amal still seems determined to keep the Palestinians out of south Lebanon. The major question will be whether any Lebanese resistance elements--Shia or Sunni--will wish to carry the guerrilla war

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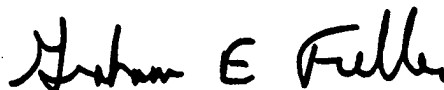
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into Israel after some kind of Israeli departure. In fact, the Israelis will not be able to leave fully and are likely to maintain some kind of presence in the south to guard its northern borders. Israeli retaliation for incidents may continue the process of radicalizing the Shia. A Shia struggle against Israel proper would in effect be a declaration of war against most Western interests in Lebanon and would probably spread to Europe and the US.

- In point of fact there are widely disparate views among a whole range of specialists and even Lebanese Shia about how the struggle for control of the Shia movement in Lebanon will come out. When the Israelis have "officially" departed we should have some clearer view of how long-lived the Shia attacks on Israel will be. While Amal attacks have decreased of late, Hizballah is stepping up organizational activity in the south. Both groups will attempt to eliminate the Israeli-supported southern army of Lebanon. I think the prospects for continued clashes with Israel will be very good.

3. The Shift of Power Against the Christians. Despite a Maronite rebellion against central government policies a few weeks ago, Syria seems well underway in crushing significant independent Christian activity--especially outside the Christian heartland. The Israelis have made it clear they will no longer intervene in Lebanon except where their interests are directly threatened. This would not seem to include the Christian forces with whom Israel is totally disenchanted in any case.

- The Israelis believe, now that Syria has relative freedom of action in Lebanon, that Syria will attempt to push Lebanon into a more solid "Arab mold" in which Lebanon would be more responsive to Syrian needs. Syria will not undertake any social or confessional revolution in Lebanon, but it might try to insure a more solid mainstream Sunni Arab line. Such a ploy might even involve some concessions to the Shia. The major implications would be that Lebanon might move more into the category of a "confrontational state" against Israel. In fact, Syria has always viewed Lebanon as a "confrontational state" and it will continue the struggle against Israel through Lebanon--although at Syrian pace and timing. Prospects for further major clashes between Syria and Israel will continue to flow out of Lebanon.



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